DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 478 535 EA 032 600

AUTHOR	Dougherty, John W.
TITLE	Classroom Management and the Middle School Philosophy. Fastback 500.
INSTITUTION	Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Bloomington, IN.
ISBN	ISBN-0-87367-882-6
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	46p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Phi Delta Kappa International, 408 N. Union St., P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789 ($3, single copy members; $4, single copy nonmembers). Tel: 812-339-1156; Tel: 800-766-1156 (Toll Free); Fax: 812-339-0018; e-mail: information@pdkintl.org; Web site: http://www.pdkintl.org.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	*Classroom Techniques; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Philosophy; Educational Principles; *Middle Schools; Secondary Education

ABSTRACT

This document explores how teachers can connect the instructional and interpersonal approaches embedded in middle-school philosophy to effective classroom management. It describes the current mismatch between middle-school philosophy and practice and how the creation of middle-school grades introduced a volatile mismatch between a school's organization and the intellectual and emotional needs of young adolescents. Traditional methods of dealing with classroom misbehavior, left over from the eras of K-8 schools and junior highs, and the goals and philosophy of the middle school have not been fully reconciled. To correct this, schools need to create small communities. They also should teach a core academic program that helps students become critical thinkers, should foster students' health and fitness, and should re-engage families in education. Schools can move toward a positive classroom climate by making rules and consequences clear to everyone, by arranging classrooms so that they can be easily managed, by showing respect for students, by involving parents in all facets of their children's education, and by making team rules that establish parameters for student conduct. Finally, the school principal should establish an atmosphere of prevention and should work with teachers to manage behavior in order to avoid removing students from the classroom. (Contains 33 references.) (RJM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 478 535

Classroom Management and the Middle School Philosophy. Fastback 500.

John W. Dougherty

2002

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✔ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

❑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. R. Walling

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

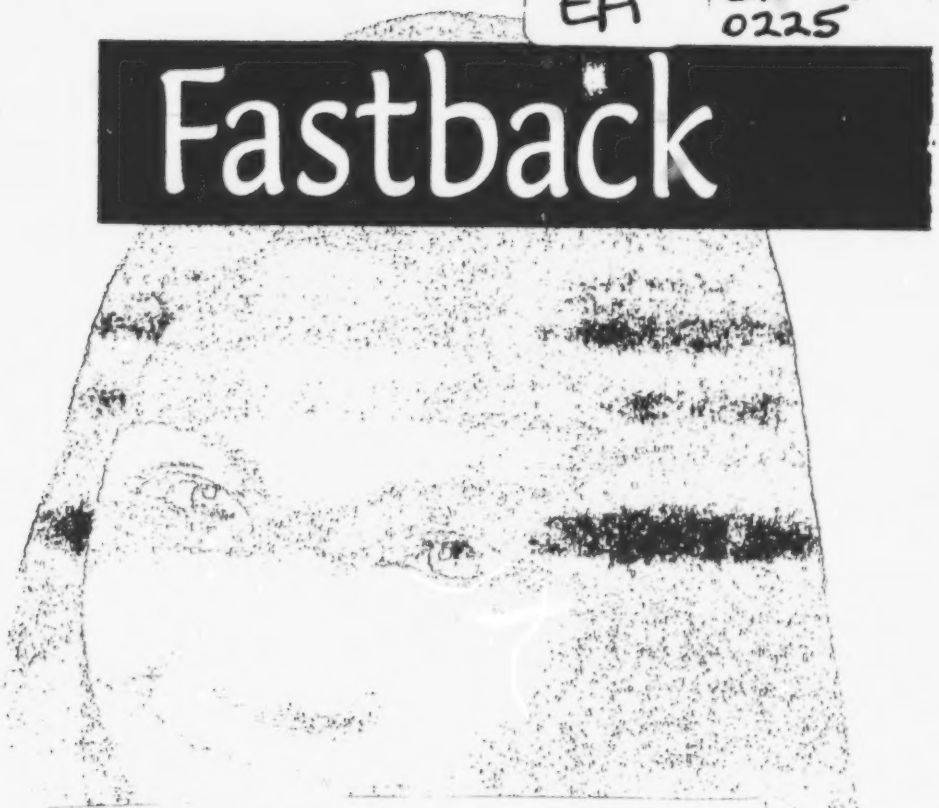
2B

EA 032 600

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA EATR 0225

500 Fastback



Classroom Management and the Middle School Philosophy

John W. Dougherty

EA032600

3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PHI DELTA KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

John W. Dougherty

John W. Dougherty is a professor of education and mathematics at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri, where he teaches law classes in the master's and specialist programs and math methods courses in undergraduate programs. He also coordinates the university's middle school program. Dougherty received the Missouri Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Previously, Dougherty was a successful middle school principal. His school was honored as a drug-free school and recognized as a blue ribbon school. He also has taught mathematics at the college level and in the public schools.

Dougherty's articles have appeared in *NASSP Bulletin, Clearing House, Middle School Journal, Phi Delta Kappan,* and other journals. He is the author of four previous fastbacks, including 158 *Summer School: A New Look,* 308 *Effective Programs for At-Risk Adolescents,* 410 *Four Philosophies that Shape the Middle School,* and 450 *Attending to Attendance.*

Series Editor, Donovan R. Walling

Classroom Management and the Middle School Philosophy

by
John W. Dougherty

ISBN 0-87367-882-6
Copyright © 2002 by the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation
Bloomington, Indiana

Table of Contents

Introduction 7

The Mismatch Between Philosophy and Practice 9

Toward a Positive Classroom Climate 14
- Rules and Consequences 15
- Settings Conducive to Good Management 16
- Keys to Good Classroom Climate 18

Effective and Appropriate Management Methods 20
- Subtle Management 22
- Explicit Management 23
- Parent Involvement 25

Teams and Rules 28
- Making Team Rules 29
- Teaching Social Responsibility 30

The Principal's Role in Classroom Management 33

Conclusion 37

References 39

Introduction

Middle school programs must be designed to meet the particular needs of 10- to 14-year-olds, and so they must differ significantly from programs designed for younger and older students. A commonly agreed-on philosophy of middle-grades education sets the standard in most middle schools. However, classroom management that is consistent with this philosophy sometimes is lacking.

When middle school teachers tell others the grade they teach, a common response is, "How in the world can you stand to be around *those* kids?" Middle school teachers smile knowingly. Yes, their students are challenging. But they also are inquisitive, impressionable, and imaginative. For these students, their peers are becoming more important than their parents. They challenge authority and speak out. They question the ideas of others and feel the need to assert their individuality. No longer "children," they are changed cognitively, socially, physically, and emotionally. All of this turmoil can lead to classroom chaos if teachers do not manage their classrooms well.

The professional literature provides little guidance with regard to effective classroom management that is consistent with the middle school philosophy. Educators sometimes feel constrained by what they believe is a finite set of discipline strategies. In reality, there are several keys to good discipline within the middle school philosophy itself. These keys include the use of advisory time, interdisciplinary and team teaching, cooperative learning, and learning styles and multiple intelligences theory.

The purpose of this fastback is to explore how teachers can effectively connect the instructional and interpersonal approaches imbedded in the middle school philosophy to effective classroom management.

The Mismatch Between Philosophy and Practice

The first part of the last century saw schools divided into two levels: elementary (K-8) and secondary (9-12). In the 1920s the junior high school began to emerge, and the former 8-4 plan evolved into a 6-3-3 plan, with a few local adaptations. Junior high schools were created as a means of introducing college preparatory subjects, especially math and foreign languages, to students at an earlier age than had been done. After World War I the school-age population surged, and so it also made sense to deal with overcrowded schools by building new structures and moving grades 7, 8, and 9.

However, dissatisfaction with the junior high soon began to grow. The 6-3-3 and 8-4 plans were considered by many to be unsuitable to meet the particular needs and interests of early adolescents. Those who proposed changes to the junior high system:

> did not suggest creating a completely new grade organization, but they did propose and illustrate changes from departmentalization to block scheduling and "little school" arrangements (a type of team organization) and a broader choice of exploratory subjects and

activities, as well as other special interest activities. (Alexander and George 1981, p. 26)

In particular, Supervising Principal Carl R. Steams, in a letter to the Pennsylvania Department of Instruction, related the following three reasons to support the development of a school composed of grades 6 through 8:

1. Physically and psychologically it seems a more natural grouping with less differential in maturity between sixth and eighth grades than between seventh and ninth.
2. The social patterns are more similar in grades 6, 7, and 8. The social maturity of the ninth-grade student more nearly parallels that of the older students.
3. This allows for a more gradual transition from the self-contained classroom to a departmentalized program. (Alexander and George 1981, p. 26)

Over the years more and more communities have made the shift from junior highs to middle schools *physically,* but philosophical concerns remain to be addressed, namely in the area of classroom management. According to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, "A volatile mismatch exists between the organization and curriculum of middle grade schools and the intellectual and emotional needs of young adolescents" (1989, pp. 8-10). Traditional methods of dealing with classroom misbehavior left over from the eras of K-8 schools and junior highs and the goals and philosophy of the middle school have not been fully reconciled.

Traditional methods of dealing with misbehavior consist of scolding, embarrassment, group punishment,

humiliation, extra assignments, lowered scores, nagging, premature judgments and actions, threats and ultimatums, or removal and isolation (Kellough and Kellough 1999). A comparison of traditional methods of management and the goals for middle schools as recommended in the report of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development will clarify the mismatch.

Goal 1: Create small communities for learning where stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth.

When a teacher humiliates students through words or actions, mutual respect is neither shown nor fostered. When a teacher calls a student "lazy" or "stupid" or scorns the student, respect is damaged. Getting angry and sending a student from the room or placing a student in the hallway as a form of punishment demeans that student in the eyes of his or her peers. When a teacher punishes an entire class for the misbehavior of one or a few, distrust, fear, and hatred grow, not mutual respect and closeness. Each of these "traditional" methods of handling misbehavior is inappropriate at the middle school level, for none of them creates the desired community of respect.

Goal 2: Teach a core academic program that results in students who are literate . . . and who know how to think critically, lead a healthy life, behave ethically, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

Students who must sit silently while being berated by a teacher or an administrator are not learning adult

methods of dealing with stress and anger. Being punished by losing grade points in class for an incident not directly related to that coursework does not allow the student to learn about the relationship between decisions and consequences. Ethical behavior and good citizenship are not encouraged when students are arbitrarily punished based on the degree of adult anger. Nor does inconsistent meting out of unrelated consequences encourage them. Students need to learn to take responsibility for their actions and recognize that choices come with consequences. It is vital that middle schools encourage students to "find personal meaning in concrete, responsible social roles . . . there is no way to learn responsible behavior except by taking responsibility" (George, Lawrence, and Bushnell 1998, p. 398).

Goal 3: Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness of young adolescents, by providing . . . access to health care and counseling services, and a health-promoting school environment.

Strong mental health is the goal, and fear of retaliation or retribution does not serve to meet this goal. When students fear the anger of their classmates as a result of whole-group punishment or fear angering their teacher, they are less likely to take academic risks, try new methods, or speak their minds. Positive student engagement is better than fear for avoiding misbehavior: "When students are engaged in powerful, meaningful activities in their classrooms, they will have little time for or interest in misbehaving" (George, Lawrence, and Bushnell 1998, p. 399).

Goal 4: Re-engage families in the education of young adolescents by . . . communicating with families about the school program and the students' progress.

Parents often are the last to know when a problem arises, because traditional teachers typically handle misbehavior within the school. To keep the family involved and knowledgeable, communication needs to begin in a positive manner so that when it becomes necessary to discuss a problem, a good rapport already exists between home and school. It is important that parents feel welcomed, needed, and involved.

Toward a Positive Classroom Climate

Developing classroom management that is consistent with the middle school philosophy begins with the creation of a positive classroom atmosphere. Following are several general principles:

Teach and encourage good social skills. Academic development is important, but young people also develop socially and emotionally and need guidance to do so in positive ways. Working cooperatively teaches students to consider various viewpoints, assume different roles, and stand in the shoes of another.

Compliment genuinely. As teachers compliment, they need to be genuine and explicit. Middle school students know when a teacher is not being honest. Teachers also need to consider when public or private praise is best.

Encourage risk-taking. Students need to learn to be responsible risk-takers. Most children are sheltered from risk and wait for decisions to be made for them. To be prepared for adult dilemmas, students must learn how to take reasonable risks. Teachers can model trying new things and, when failures occur, demonstrate how to learn from the experience.

Model tolerance. Teachers must model mature methods of dealing with disagreements. Students must be shown that acceptance of differing views is not the issue. Rather, the key is respecting the rights of others to hold those views.

Help students feel valuable. "Teachers and administrators can help students develop a sense of trust in the school system by helping them see that they are valuable and that they belong" (George, Lawrence, and Bushnell 1998, p. 448). Students learn to take responsibility for their actions, acknowledging misbehavior and taking consequences. They need to feel they have control over themselves and that others will listen to their ideas and treat them with respect.

Recognize effort. Often recognition of movement from a D to a C can mean more to a student than recognition of one more A. Recognizing effort may entice greater effort.

Rules and Consequences

Classroom rules and procedures should not only be expressed and posted, they must be taught because students' knowledge of them must not be taken for granted. Teachers have various expectations and rules; and when diverse students converge on one classroom, they may not know what type of behavior is expected. C.M. Charles notes that:

> it has become increasingly evident that student behavior is improved when teachers demonstrate exactly how they expect students to behave in the classroom — aca-

15

> demically and socially — and when students are given practice demonstrating those behaviors through guided activities and role playing. (1996, p. 207)

Many teachers discuss and post classroom rules, but practicing the rules and periodically reviewing them are necessary next steps.

Rules also need to be clear, simple, brief, and positive (George, Lawrence, and Bushnell 1998). Rather than "Students will not hit or punch other students," the rule might say "Students will respect each other and their belongings." And the consequences for breaking rules must be applied consistently and fairly and must be directly related to the offense (George, Lawrence, and Bushnell 1998). Some teachers lose their tempers and punish without considering the logical consequence for the infraction. Assigning a 200-word essay to a student as a punishment for sticking a pencil in an aquarium makes writing a punishment. A more reasonable consequence might be not to allow the student near the aquarium for a period of time.

Settings Conducive to Good Management

Settings, furnishings, resources, rules and regulations, and ambiance, including the attitudes of the individuals in the settings, create *climate*. Climate affects students' sense of well-being and consequently how students function on all levels. All people perform best in comfortable environments — settings that are comfortable both physically and psychologically. Numerous studies suggest that purposeful attention to the learning envi-

ronment can improve teacher and student performance, attitude, and motivation (Foster-Harrison and Adams-Bullock 1998).

Carl Boyd explains:

> If our problems were seen as part of what we do throughout the day within our classroom, then they would be viewed more as opportunities to teach than disruptions against what we are attempting to do. If we can do that on an on-going basis, not only will our problem-solving skills be enhanced, but the incidence of problems is likely to be substantially reduced because things that come up if, indeed, students regard themselves as part of the classroom team, will often be solved even before the teacher is aware that a problem existed. (1991, p. 55)

Students learn best in a classroom without distractive, disruptive, and undisciplined students. In addition, teachers and students enjoy being in a classroom environment that is free of discipline problems (McLemore 1981). Student behavior will be at its best when students are actively engaged in positive learning experiences. But some students likely will misbehave if the classroom experience does not meet their needs or interests.

Differentiated instruction contributes to a positive classroom atmosphere. The teacher's challenge is to provide needed diversity and variety in learning activities. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences describes various types of learners, but the categories are not absolutes. And the task of structuring diverse experiences should not be viewed as overwhelming. For example, lessons high in visual content will help not only the

visual learner but also the auditory learner, who may be able to stretch his or capabilities. Tomlinson (1995) suggests offering students a range of learning tasks developed along the following eight continua:

- Concrete to abstract.
- Simple to complex.
- Basic to transformational.
- Fewer facets to multi-facets.
- Smaller leaps to greater leaps.
- More structured to more open.
- Less independence to greater independence.
- Slower to quicker.

Along these eight continua, teachers may adjust lessons to appeal to varied interests. Tomlinson includes in her differentiated classroom plan the use of multiple intelligences and recommends that students and parents become knowledgeable about their learning style and strengths. Middle school teachers should share information about successful learning approaches.

Keys to Good Classroom Climate

Teachers play a central role in establishing classroom climate by their routine actions. For example, starting classes promptly shows students that the teacher is prepared and that attention is required immediately (Lawton 1993).

The teacher's voice also is important. "Voice modulation is effective in classroom management, as it affects student interest and attention. Movement and voice

control attest to the teacher's enthusiasm and contribute to the confidence with which the teacher handles the classroom" (Lawton 1993, p. 11). To discreetly handle disruptive students, teachers may use a soft, low-pitched voice. This can be effective with students because it is private and prevents hostile protests and denials (McDaniel 1986). In many situations, "teachers tend to raise their voices when reprimanding a misbehaving student. It is more effective to move toward the student and in a lowered voice to give a specific, quiet, direct command" (McDaniel 1994, p. 257).

According to Moles, routine teacher monitoring of student behavior is necessary to establish and sustain classroom activities. The teacher needs to "monitor the pace, rhythm, and duration of classroom events. Excessive delays in the flow of classroom events or abrupt shifts in direction are often associated with inappropriate or disruptive student behavior" (1989, p. 14).

Finally, by modeling appropriate behavior, teachers demonstrate how the classroom should function. Certain traits are essential, such as being courteous, prompt, well-organized, enthusiastic, and patient (McDaniel 1986). Teachers exhibiting these traits "produce students who exhibit similar characteristics, at least to some degree" (McDaniel 1986, p. 64).

Effective and Appropriate Management Methods

No matter how creative, prepared, or knowledgeable a teacher is, students will misbehave. When that happens, effective teachers know a variety of ways to address the situation. Teachers must ensure that the methods they choose fit the needs of their students. Following are some appropriate options:

Modeling. Students at the middle level are watching adults and learning from their behaviors. Teachers should behave in a calm, mature manner when dealing with stressful, irritating situations.

Subtle corrections. Using eye contact, expressions, hand signals, and proximity (standing or sitting near the student) are effective methods for getting or keeping students' attention.

Four steps. Woolfolk suggests a four-step approach to dealing with behavior: 1) Make eye contact with the student, move close, or use nonverbal signals; 2) remind the student of the rule or procedure to be followed; 3) have the student state the rule and what to do to correct the behavior; and, if these steps do not succeed, 4) tell the student in a "clear, assertive, and unhostile way to stop the misbehavior" (1998, p. 459).

Praise. Teachers need to catch students "being good" and acknowledge appropriate behavior. Some students will respond better to private recognition, others to public praise.

Contracts. Writing down behavioral expectations in the form of a contract can be helpful. George, Lawrence, and Bushnell (1998) suggest that a parent, the student, and the teacher all be active in monitoring the student's progress.

Journals. Students may respond in journal form to behavioral questions: What are the rules? the consequences? Writing is an exercise in practicing responsibility and encourages thinking before acting.

Assertive discipline. To use this management method, the teacher specifies exactly how a rule infraction will be addressed. For example, the first two times a student misbehaves, the student's name is noted, usually on a chalk board or other posting. The third time, the student is sent to time-out. The fourth time, the student is sent to the principal. And so on in an escalation of consequences.

Peer mediation. In mediation, students having difficulty with another student are encouraged to: 1) jointly define the conflict, 2) exchange viewpoints and possible options, 3) reverse perspectives, 4) create at least three mutually acceptable solutions, and 5) reach an agreement (Woolfolk 1998).

Conflict resolution. In the conflict resolution model, selected students are trained to become mediators. When a problem arises, the mediator brings the conflicting students together, and they engage in peer mediation that is student-directed.

Undergirding all of these methods for achieving successful classroom management is a basic belief that the root of character education, and thus good behavior, is the teacher. The teacher's ideals, poise, self-control, manners, voice, choice of clothing, and attitude toward life are all powerful forces for education. A school under the direction of a faculty with strong character traits will be well-ordered.

Subtle Management

Effective classroom management often can be achieved in subtle ways. For example, the teacher should arrange students' seats so that every area of the classroom is easily accessible. Distracting objects should be removed, but the teacher should be careful not to rob the classroom of objects that provide interest and stimulate inquiry.

Another unobtrusive management technique is "planned ignoring" (Walker and Shea 1995). Before attempting this technique the teacher should determine why the student is misbehaving. If the misbehavior is simply a way to get attention, then any response, positive or negative, will likely increase the misbehavior, rather than extinguish it. With planned ignoring, the teacher does not make any response to the student. Planned ignoring works especially well in combination with praising other students. When a teacher first uses this technique, the unacceptable behavior may increase in intensity or duration. If this happens, it is an indication that the strategy is working. Resisting the temptation to react is important.

22

Two other unobtrusive techniques often are complementary: proximity control and signal interference (Walker and Shea 1995). When teachers move around the classroom, their presence often serves as a cue to the student, resulting in the discontinuation of unacceptable behavior. Making eye contact can be enough to control behavior; but other times nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, toe taps, or body language (such as folded arms) will need to be used. Nonverbal signals alert students that they are being disruptive, but they help students to "save face" by not drawing other students' attention to the correction.

Explicit Management

Never assume that students are aware they are breaking a classroom rule; let them know what they are doing. For example, "Carlos, the rule is raise your hand when you want to speak and I will call on you as soon as possible"; then as soon as Carlos raises his hand, call on him and praise him for behaving responsibly. The most effective strategy a teacher can use is to stop minor disruptions in this way before they become major. Jones and Jones suggest, "An inappropriately angry teacher's response creates tension and increases disobedience and disruptive behavior. When a teacher reacts calmly and quickly to a student's disruptive behavior, other students respond by improving their own behavior" (1990, p. 295). When a teacher shows respect for the student, he or she will be more likely to comply with the teacher's instructions, and the teacher has averted turning a minor disruption into a major catastrophe.

Classroom discipline problems often are created by the overuse of punishments. Punishment brings attention to those who misbehave, which may be a negative reinforcer. When a child is punished, he or she feels bad personally and negatively views the teacher, the class, and school in general. According to Wasicsko and Ross, "Punishment only temporarily suppresses bad behavior and disrupts the continuity of lessons and reduces the time spent on productive learning" (1994, p. 250). In fact, Greer (1981) found that the use of disapproval statements by teachers resulted in the students avoiding what was taught during free-time settings. For example, while teaching reading, if a teacher delivers frequent disapproval statements to students, the students will be less likely to read books when they have leisure time. Sulzer-Azaroff and Mayer note that "One more critical disadvantage to resorting to punishment too frequently is that the practice inadvertently may teach others to use it as well" (1986, p. 146).

Glasser's control theory states that humans have five basic needs (belonging, power, fun, freedom, and survival). The more a teacher addresses these needs in the classroom, the more students will enjoy it and experience success. Middle school students, when surveyed about teachers they learned best from, indicated humor, helpfulness, understanding, and interest, as well as caring about them as individuals, as the most effective characteristics a teacher can possess. By recognizing students' efforts and successes, teachers express enthusiasm for them and build a strong student-teacher relationship (George, Lawrence, and Bushnell 1998).

Teachers must listen to students and their needs, offer them choices, and allow them to be responsible for themselves (Blumenfeld-Jones 1996).

Another relationship-building quality is for teachers to show their emotions. Students view teachers as more human and honest when they share their humor, concern, sorrow, or confusion. Teachers should admit when they make an error and offer an apology when mistakes occur. Openness and honesty gain students' respect and build a trusting relationship (Lawton 1993). This is not to say that teachers should show anger when responding to misbehavior, however.

Seif interviewed teachers and asked what the terms "individualized, personalized teaching and learning" meant to them. They replied, making "some part of the lesson important to each child — to give each child some sense that this lesson is important to them" (Seif 1979). In building a strong student-teacher relationship, teachers must know each student well and "know what is rewarding and what is punishing for each" (Wasicsko and Ross 1994, p. 252). To know the students' home backgrounds, behavior in previous years, and their academic abilities is essential. This knowledge influences the quality of relationship a teacher will have with students (Munn et al. 1989).

Parent Involvement

Vital to the success of any management method is the involvement of parents. Teachers need to establish rapport with the parents early. Many parents are ap-

prehensive about their child starting middle school. Too often the first communication a teacher makes with a parent is a negative one. Calling a parent to complain about a student's behavior prior to establishing mutual respect is likely to put the parent on the defensive.

Methods used to establish rapport with parents include open houses, positive notes home, telephone calls, and newsletters (Charles 1996). Teachers should call home about a week before school starts and talk to the parents and the child. This contact is beneficial because parents get to express their fears and can be reassured that their child will be all right in middle school and will adjust to the new setting. Incidentally, the team approach to teaching middle school, which will be discussed later, aids communication because each teacher need call only a percentage of the students' parents to establish a team contact. It is important to notify parents concerning class expectations. Sending a copy of rules home for the parent and student to sign ensures that when a teacher must call a parent about misbehavior, the parent already knows what is expected.

A monthly team newsletter will keep parents informed and makes them feel part of their child's education (Woolfolk 1998). The use of an "important date" calendar, included in the newsletter, will keep parents informed about deadlines and key events during the school year.

Student-led conferences are another effective way to involve parents. One way to structure such conferences is for students to write a letter to their parents, discussing academic, behavioral, and social progress. Students

get to share their perspective on what is happening in their lives. But they do not send the letter. Instead, at the conference the student attends and begins the conference by reading the letter. Having the students lead the conferences gives them responsibility.

Teams and Rules

Most middle schools are divided into grade-level teams, and it is crucial that rules among the team teachers be consistent. Having a few positive rules is ideal, but too often does not happen because teachers do not take time to reach consensus on the rules. Building consensus and consistency is vital for a school to have a productive climate and good discipline.

Teaming allows teachers and students to work together to achieve academic and personal goals for students. "Teachers can resolve problems together, sometimes before they reach the crisis stage. Teachers report that classroom discipline problems are dramatically reduced through teaming" (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1989, p. 38).

In fact, the interaction of teachers on a team is a major factor in the success of student management. If a student's bad behavior is a concern for one teacher but not for another, inconsistency will send a mixed message to the misbehaving student. This is not to say that a student may not behave differently for different teachers. While consistent student behavior is desirable, it is the

consistent response by various teachers to the student's behavior that is important.

Mutual support of team members when handling discipline issues can be one of the prime benefits of teaming. The support becomes especially important when decisions are challenged. However, a teacher making disciplinary decisions independently cannot automatically expect the support of the other team members when faced by challenge. The teacher must be prepared to defend his or her actions and not create stress within the team by requesting support over something with which they do not agree.

When a teacher does need help from another team member, consensus about rules and consequences means that a system is in place for help to be given. The most effective teams are those that function in an atmosphere of openness and sharing. Teachers in distress are more likely to seek help from their peers in such a nonthreatening atmosphere.

Administrators should attend team meetings as an equal member. So doing will encourage staff involvement, while allowing the administrator to offer viewpoints from an administrative perspective. The involved administrator also may challenge ideas in a positive way to encourage further thought and reflection.

Making Team Rules

All rules must follow the policies and procedures of the school. These are general guidelines that establish the parameters for student conduct. Informed about

school policy and procedures, the team can begin to plan rules for their classrooms. The best time to develop rules is before the school year begins. The team should decide what situations should be covered and what rules should be in effect for those situations. This basic framework will permit the team to guide the students toward the formalized version of the rules and give them ownership.

Involving students in the decision-making process is the next step. Student participation in setting rules has been demonstrated to be effective in terms of increased compliance (Dickerson and Creedon 1981), lower numbers of violations (Felixbrod and O'Leary 1974), and greater academic success (Lovitt and Curtis 1969). Involving students in making team rules promotes student ownership and responsibility (Emmer et al. 1994).

There are several techniques that a teacher can use. On the first day of class, for example, students can discuss the role of rules in society and how to apply them in their classroom. They can be asked to describe model behavior and use this description as a basis for what rules should apply in the classroom. Specifying student behaviors in observable terms provides the foundation for the rules, and identifying teacher reaction to any misbehavior provides the foundation for the consequences.

Teaching Social Responsibility

The world's attention has been drawn to school violence. A step toward preventing violence in schools is teaching social responsibility. According to Seif (1979), effective teachers:

- Build up students' egos.
- Show students that their expression (personality) is valuable.
- Help students take responsibility for their learning.
- Help students learn interdependence — feel responsible for anyone who is not making it.
- Develop basic academic skills.

Social responsibility includes resolving conflicts in nonviolent ways, forming friendships, being assertive, solving problems, resisting negative peer pressure, and making good decisions. The focus of social responsibility training is to prepare students to self-monitor and practice self-control instead of teachers controlling their behavior (Moles 1989).

Much of the social responsibility aspect of education may be taught through the usual academic lessons. For the most part, middle school students are at the stage of development that Piaget referred to as the "concrete operations." Students in this stage learn best when actively involved in hands-on learning, using concrete props and visual aids and manipulating objects. Thus social problems should be presented to students in the context of lessons that are interactive and interesting and that encourage risk-taking within a safe environment.

In summary, educators who succeed in developing social responsibility follow 10 basic principles suggested by Queen, Blackwelder, and Mallen (1997):

1. To have responsible students, teachers must be responsible.
2. Teachers state instructional objectives clearly.

31

3. Responsibility is taught and incorporated instructionally throughout the year.
4. The classroom environment is warm and inviting.
5. Instruction is interactive, and student classroom participation is high.
6. Standards and guidelines replace rigid school and classroom rules.
7. Children are treated fairly but not always disciplined in the same manner.
8. Consequences are used to teach students to self-correct inappropriate behaviors and to assume responsibility for their actions.
9. Student performance and responsibility are encouraged and acknowledged. Bribery and predetermined rewards are not used.
10. Students practice internal behavior control, rather than having their behavior controlled externally.

32

The Principal's Role in Classroom Management

The definition of *discipline* most common in schools is that of strict control to enforce obedience. When a child is a "discipline problem," that child does not obey those in authority. A child who is not a discipline problem submits to authority and readily accepts the rules set forth. Positive, effective classroom management must begin with an examination of this simplistic sense of discipline.

A key to improving discipline is to look at the root word *disciple*, meaning "one who learns." Unfortunately, sending the misbehaving student to the office for "discipline," as is often the practice in the middle schools (and at other levels of schooling), actually interferes with a student's education. When a child is in the office for failure to obey, learning is being missed. No classroom is put on hold while a trouble-maker is absent.

This is not to say that misbehaving students should not be sent to the principal when the need arises. In effective classroom management, that need should arise less often. And it is important that when the student is

sent to the principal, the focus of "discipline" is instruction of another form.

Principals should try to educate when they discipline. An example would be using each disciplinary office referral as a mini-writing conference. When a student is referred to the office, they may be asked to write about the events that occurred. After their version is written, the principal should read the paper aloud and ask the student to explain vague words or slang expressions, identify antecedents of all pronouns, correct any blatant grammatical errors, and have the students revise their statements (Varner 1999, p. 28).

"Discipline is deceptive," according to Edna Varner, principal of Howard School of Academics and Technology in Chattanooga, Tennessee. "It is not what ails chaotic classrooms; it is merely a symptom" (1999). Varner believes that discipline is a symptom of the pervasive problem of not engaging today's youth in learning and not making personal connections with them in order to address their individual, educational strengths and weaknesses. She warns that principals should not sacrifice school reform while dealing with day-to-day discipline. School reform in the areas of structure and instruction will help decrease misbehavior incidences. Contemporary middle school principals can effectively handle discipline by creating a shared vision, fostering collaborative and team relationships among staff, and providing the information and training teachers need to be successful with students.

Teachers inherently want to improve. Middle school students are very good at finding the weakness in the

teacher's armor, and it is the expert in the school — the principal — who must correct that weakness. When observing teachers, the administrator must search out and analyze those instructional practices that create discipline problems. "When I observe teachers, I make it clear I am not there to blame them or document their poor performance but to help them identify instructional practices that contribute to discipline problems and those that deter misbehavior," states Varner (1999).

Middle school principals should direct prevention programs for serious misbehaviors not only at students but also toward faculty, providing specific training in classroom management. "Principals used to be bosses. Their central role hasn't changed. They still must run a school, hire teachers, and be responsible for what happens within the walls of their schools. But at many schools, they are now seen as leaders of teams in which they, teachers, administrators, and parents collaborate on most everything: curriculum, instruction, discipline" (Herguth 1999, p. 26).

Research by Frederic Jones shows that disruptions account for 45% to 55% of the off-task behavior in the classroom (Schupe 1998). These disruptions also account for the disciplinary problems that are sent daily to the principal's office. Major disciplinary offenses are not the problems that principals address on a daily basis. There are two causes for this revolving door of minor discipline infractions. First, there is no clear and consistent school discipline policy; second, the classroom teacher may not have the instructional skills to handle minor discipline problems or to prevent them from becoming

major infractions (Schupe 1998). To effectively prevent discipline problems, researchers recommend staff training in class management, conflict management, and socialization skills to which many teachers are not exposed during preservice education.

Conclusion

It is impossible to eliminate misbehavior. Students need opportunities to test limits. But both teachers and students function best when limits and expectations are clearly defined. The definition should be age-appropriate and match the developmental stages of the adolescent. They are not children, high school students, or mini-adults.

The challenge of middle school teaching is the balancing act that is required to successfully manage a classroom in ways consistent with the middle school philosophy. Effective teaching requires more than merely planning and presenting subject matter to students. Teachers must plan, prepare, and implement strategies that will enhance the flow of the lessons and maintain order and structure in the daily transitions and routines.

According to Lawton, author of *The Effective Middle Level Teacher*, "presenting realistic challenges, showing confidence in student ability to perform, being sensitive to student characteristics and learning styles, and taking time to plan and organize" (1993, p. 10) are all aspects of effective classroom management. Anderson and col-

leagues (1979) aver that good management is anything a teacher can do to organize students, time, space, and materials and to instill responsibility, whereby student learning can take place. In their book, *Classroom Management* (1970), Johnson and Bany suggest that classroom management consists of practices that create conditions in which individuals can achieve their goals. And according to Chemlynski (1996), classroom management techniques must be designed for teacher ease and to reduce the teacher's amount of work.

The practice of effective classroom management relies heavily on each teacher's ability to plan and implement positive, interesting programs in the classroom, as well as to build trust, respect, and meaningful relationships with students. Teachers who are enthusiastic, genuine, and organized are effective classroom managers and positive mentors for students. Finally, teachers who treat their students with respect and consideration — and who help them to see the importance of what they are learning — are supporting the students' efforts to be responsible and engendering a classroom climate in which good behavior is the norm.

References

Alexander, W.M., and George, P.S. *The Exemplary Middle School*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981.

Anderson, L.M., et al. *Dimensions in Classroom Management Derived from Recent Research*. Report No. 6006. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1979.

Blumenfeld-Jones, D.S. "Conventional Systems of Classroom Discipline (The Patriarchy Speaks)." *Journal of Educational Thought* 30, no. 1 (1996): 5-21.

Boyd, Carl R. *Plain Teaching: A Conversation with Colleagues*. Kansas City, Mo.: Westport, 1991.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents. *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*. Washington, D.C., 1989.

Charles, C.M. *Building Classroom Discipline*. 5th ed. White Plains, N.Y.: Longman, 1996.

Chemlynski, C. "Discipline as Teaching." *Education Digest* 62, no. 3 (1996): 42-44.

Dickerson, E.A., and Creedon, C.F. "Self-Selection of Standards by Children: The Relative Effectiveness of Pupil-Selected and Teacher-Selected Standards of Performance." *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 14, no. 4 (1981): 425-433.

Emmer, E.T.; Evertson, C.M.; Clements, B.S.; and Worsham, M.E. *Classroom Management for Secondary Teachers*. 3rd ed. Needham, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1994.

Felixbrod, J., and O'Leary, K. "Self-Determination of Academic Standards by Children: Toward Freedom from External Control." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 66, no. 3 (1974): 845-85.

Foster-Harrison, Elizabeth S., and Adams-Bullock, Ann. *Creating an Inviting Classroom Environment*. Fastback 433. Bloomington, Ind: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1998.

George, P.; Lawrence, G.; and Bushnell, D. *Handbook for Middle School Education*. New York: Longman, 1998.

Greer, R.D. "An Operant Approach to Motivation and Affect: Ten Years of Research in Music Learning." In *Documentary Report of the Ann Arbor Symposium: Application of Psychology to the Teaching and Learning of Music*, edited by Rebecca Grier Taylor. Washington, D.C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1981.

Herguth, Robert. "Schools Putting the 'Pal' Back in Principal." *Chicago Sun-Times*, 14 November 1999, p. 26. Available at www.newsbank.com.

Johnson, L.V., and Bany, M.A. *Classroom Management: Theory and Skill Training*. London: MacMillan, 1970.

Jones, V.F., and Jones, L.S. *Comprehensive Classroom Management*. Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1990.

Kellough, R.D., and Kellough, N.G. *Middle School Teaching: A Guide to Methods and Resources*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Simon and Schuster, 1999.

Lawton, E. *The Effective Middle Level Teacher*. Reston, Va.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1993.

Lovitt, T.C., and Curtis, K. "Academic Response Rate as a Function of Teacher- and Self-Imposed Contingencies." *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* 2, no. 2 (1969): 49-53.

McDaniel, T.R. "A Primer on Classroom Discipline: Principles Old and New." *Phi Delta Kappan* 68 (September 1986): 63-68.

McDaniel, T.R. "How to Be an Effective Authoritarian: A Back-to-Basics Approach to Classroom Discipline." *The Clearing House* 67, no. 5 (1994): 254-57.

McLemore, William P. "The ABC's of Classroom Discipline." *The Clearing House* 54 (January 1981): 205-206.

Moles, O.C. *Strategies to Reduce Student Misbehavior.* Report No. OR-89-558. Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1989.

Munn, P., et al. *How Do Teachers Talk about Maintaining Effective Discipline in Their Classrooms?* Report No. SP-032-507. Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1989.

Queen, J.A.; Blackwelder, B.B.; and Mallen, L.P. *Responsible Classroom Management for Teachers and Students.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1997.

Schupe, Jim. "Prescriptive Discipline: Just What the Doctor Ordered." *NASSP Bulletin* (March 1998): 25-30. Available at www.nassp.org.

Seif, Elliott. "What Are Teachers Like Who Use a Personalized Approach?" *Educational Leadership* 28 (December 1979): 262-64.

Sulzer-Azaroff, B., and Mayer, G.R. *Achieving Educational Excellence Using Behavioral Strategies.* New York: CBS College Publishing, 1986.

Tomlinson, C. *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms.* Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1995.

Varner, E. "The Mark of Leadership: Turn Discipline Problems into Opportunities to Improve Instruction." *Middle Ground* 2 (April 1999): 27-28.

Walker, J.E., and Shea, T.M. *Behavior Management: A Practical Approach for Educators.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1995.

Wasicsko, M., and Ross, S.M. "How to Create Discipline Problems." *The Clearing House* 67, no. 5 (1994): 248-53.

Woolfolk, A.E. *Educational Psychology*. Needham Heights, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.

Recent Books Published by the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation

A Digest of Supreme Court Decisions Affecting Education, Fourth Edition
Perry A. Zirkel
Trade paperback. $32.95 (PDK members, $24.95)
CD-ROM edition.* $69.95 (PDK members, $52.95)
Set (1 book, 1 CD) $87.95 (PDK members, $69.95)
*CD is compatible for PCs and Macs.

Flying with Both Wings: Inventing the Past to Teach the Future
Neil Brewer
Trade paperback. $17.95 (PDK members, $13.95)

Environmental Education: A Resource Handbook
Joe E. Heimlich
Trade paperback. $22.95 (PDK members, $17.95)

Care for Young Children in Four English-Speaking Countries
Jo Ann Belk et al.
Trade paperback. $17.95 (PDK members, $13.95)

Psychology of Success
Emery Stoops
Trade paperback. $14.95 (PDK members, $11.95)

Tutor Quest
Edward E. Gordon
Trade paperback. $10.95 (PDK members, $8.95)

Use Order Form on Next Page Or Phone 1-800-766-1156

A processing charge is added to all orders.
Prices are subject to change without notice.

Complete online catalog at http://www.pdkintl.org

Order Form

SHIP TO:	
STREET	
CITY/STATE OR PROVINCE/ZIP OR POSTAL CODE	
DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER	PDK MEMBER ROLL NUMBER

QUANTITY	*TITLE*	*PRICE*

ORDERS MUST INCLUDE PROCESSING CHARGE

Total Merchandise	*Processing Charge*
Up to $50	$5
$50.01 to $100	$10
More than $100	$10 plus 5% of total

Special shipping available upon request.
Prices subject to change without notice.

SUBTOTAL	
Indiana residents add 5% Sales Tax	
PROCESSING CHARGE	
TOTAL	

☐ Payment Enclosed (check payable to Phi Delta Kappa International)

Bill my ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

ACCT # _____ DATE _____

EXP DATE ___/___ SIGNATURE _____

Mail or fax your order to: Phi Delta Kappa International,
P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789. USA
Fax: (812) 339-0018. Phone: (812) 339-1156

For fastest service, phone 1-800-766-1156 and use your credit card.

Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks

This series, published each fall and spring, offers short treatments of a variety of topics in education. Each fastback is intended to be a focused, authoritative work on a subject of current interest to educators and other readers. Since the inception of the series in 1972, the fastbacks have proven valuable for individual and group professional development in schools and districts and as readings in undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation classes. More than 450 titles in the series have been published, and more than eight million copies have been disseminated worldwide.

For a current list of available fastbacks and other publications, please contact:

Phi Delta Kappa International
P.O. Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47402-0789 U.S.A.
1-800-766-1156
(812) 339-1156
http://www.pdkintl.org

The Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation is focused on the future. Contributions to the Educational Foundation support scholarships, educational publications, and professional development programs — resources needed to promote excellence in education at all levels.

The Educational Foundation is pleased to accept contributions of cash, marketable securities, and real estate, as well as deferred gifts. The Educational Foundation is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and contributions are tax deductible. PDK is more than willing to work with your estate planner, attorney, or accountant to find a plan that best meets your needs.

For more information about the Educational Foundation and how to make a contribution, please contact:

Phi Delta Kappa
Educational Foundation
P.O. Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47402-0789
USA

Toll-free: 1-800-766-1156
Voice: (812) 339-1145
Fax: (812) 339-0018
E-mail: headquarters@pdkintl.org
http://www.pdkintl.org

ISBN 0-87367-882-6

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").